

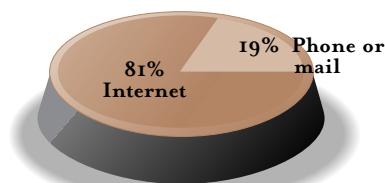


Glad You Inquired

Travel Montana's websites continue to gain popularity. For the four-month period of January through April, 2000, the www.visitmt.com site hosted 379,868 visitors, a 13 percent increase over last year. The kids site, montanakids.com, saw a 78 percent user increase from the same time period last year, with 140,965 visitors.

"The vast majority of consumers who were using traditional channels to access information are now finding what they need on the internet."

1999 Tourism Inquiries



Telephone inquiries asking for Montana travel information, however, have declined. In the first four months of this year, the call center answered 35,077 calls on the toll-free line, compared to 44,759 people in 1999. This is an 18 percent decline. But according to Travel Montana Director, Matthew Cohn, this is an indication of things to come. "The vast majority of consumers who were using traditional channels to access information are now finding what they need on the internet. In 1999, 81 percent of the inquiries for Montana travel information came electronically from the website." Cohn explains that Travel Montana is adapting to these changes and implementing the latest technologies to keep up with the consumer demand.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye: Call for Applications

Rural Community Tourism Assessment Program

Travel Montana's rural Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP) is now accepting applications for the 2000-2001 session. Three rural communities will be selected for this 8-month "self help" program that looks at the current role tourism plays in the local economy, resident attitudes about tourism and their community, community marketing, and projects that could strengthen or expand tourism's benefits for the community. The CTAP program is a cooperative project of Travel Montana and MSU Extension with assistance from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. The three selected CTAP communities for 2000 will begin the process in September.

TIIP Grant

Application forms for Travel Montana's Year 2000 Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) Grants are now available. The amount of TIIP Grant funding available will be announced in June following the Tourism Advisory Council meeting. If you download an application from the Intranet Site, you will need to request from Travel Montana a hard copy of Montana's 1998-2002 "Strategic Plan for Travel & Tourism," a reference publication needed to complete the application.

Applications for both programs are available by calling Travel Montana, 444-2654 or by visiting our Intranet Site—travelmontana.state.mt.us—News & Updates, Travel Montana Applications, Regulations and Forms section. The deadline for

submitting CTAP and TIIP applications is 5 p.m. August 1, 2000. For more information, contact Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, 444-4366 or e-mail: victor@visitmt.com.

Did You Know?

- * Triple Creek Ranch was named the top "Best Rustic Retreat" by *Gourmet Magazine*
- * *Family Fun* magazine named Glacier National Park one of the top 10 family travel destinations in the country for 2000
- * Missouri River Country was featured in the June 2000 editions of AAA's *Home & Away* and *Travel America* magazines
- * Travel Montana's Film Office won six first-place-marketing awards from the Association of Film Commissioners International
- * The O Spear Guest Ranch in Broadus was featured on CBS's *Early Morning*.

A Useful Tool

Travel Montana's industry intranet site travelmontana.state.mt.us is a great tool for accessing research reports, statistics and general information. Because new activities, studies and opportunities are changing daily, we invite you to bookmark this site and visit often. New postings include:

- * Affordable Meetings West leads are posted under Our Programs/Meetings & Conventions
- * RMI Office updates and trade show leads are posted under Our Programs/Overseas Marketing
- * Under News & Updates/Travel Montana Applications, Regulations and Forms, you can find: TIIP guidelines, applications and Frequently Asked Questions

Take Our Lead

One definition of the noun "lead" is an indication or clue. And when Travel Montana's Group and Overseas Marketing Manager, Pam Gosink, and Group Travel Specialist, Marlee Iverson, attend an international or domestic trade show that is just what they come away with, a lead. They meet with tour operators, travel agents, meeting planners and media contacts, who give Pam and Marlee a clue or an indication of the Montana tourism experience they want to have. Most leads require follow-up and that's when it is important for Montana's tourism suppliers to directly contact the "lead" with the information they requested.

Here are some tips for follow-up:

- Read each lead and respond to those that fit your tourism product
- Respond in a timely manner
- Realize that your first mailing is the tip of the iceberg, it may take 2-3 years for results
- Keep in touch on a regular basis
- When responding to tour operators or meeting planners, remember that they are planning at least 1-2 years out. Send them current rates as well as rates for the following year, but be sure to honor whatever rates you send them.

If you would like to receive international leads contact Pam Gosink at 444-4384 or e-mail pam@visitmt.com. For domestic leads contact Marlee Iverson at 444-4107 or e-mail marlee@visitmt.com or check out Travel Montana's Intranet site.

On Location In Montana

Montana's film office has had a busy 2000. To date, the staff has worked on 10 completed projects including a feature film, short film, two still shots, three television programs, two assists and a commercial. "With these kinds of numbers, Montana is off to a good start for the summer," says Film Office Manager, Lonie Stimac. She adds that seventy-seven percent of the crew that worked on a recent Canon commercial were Montanans. The production was shot in four different Bozeman locations and used services from five Montana businesses.

Covering The Map

Travel Montana's Publicity Office and the state's six tourism regions have nine "familiarization" tours planned for the summer and fall seasons. Writers and photographers will embark on a historic lodging tour in Russell Country, attend a pow wow and rodeo in Missouri River Country or discover the legends of the West in Custer Country. Other FAM tours include retracing the route of Captain William Clark on the Yellowstone River in Yellowstone Country, touring ghost towns in Gold West Country, traveling Glacier Country by boat, trains and automobile, trekking outdoors in Russell and Gold West Countries, and saying "I do" with a bridal FAM in Yellowstone Country.

The travel writers and photographers who have currently committed to these tours represent *Home & Away*, *Sunset*, *Trailer Life*,

MotorHome, *Travel America*, *Antique Showcase Magazine*, *Houston Tribune*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Boston Herald*, *GreatestEscapes.com*, *sundancerswest.com* and *travellady.com*, among others.

Staff Changes

Matthew Cohn's Administrative Assistant, Carol Crockett, formally Carol Johansen has been named the new MTRI Coordinator. Carol replaces Sarah Lawlor who is now the Consumer Marketing Manager.

Calendar of Events

June

- 5 Deadline, Winter Calendar survey
- 5-6 TAC Meeting, Missoula
- 9-13 RMI Round-Up, Spearfish, SD and Cheyenne, WY
- 14-19 "Event of a Lifetime" FAM - Missouri River Country
- 17-23 Meetings & Convention FAM - Missoula, Bozeman and Billings
- 19 MTRI Electronic Media Focus Group - Helena
- 20-25 "Legends of the West" FAM - Custer Country
- 23-25 Show Biz Expo West - Los Angeles, CA

July

- 13-18 "Ghost Town" FAM- Gold West Country

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.



Travel Montana

1424 Ninth Avenue
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Helena, MT
Permit No. 20